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Shock Tempo Shipbuilding/Soviet Specifications

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1.

Gdansk Shipyards

2. "There are three shipyards in Gdansk: Stocznia Gdanska, Stocznia Polnocna (both subordinated to the Ministry for Machine Building - Ministerstwo Przemyslu Maszynowego) and the Repairs Shipyard (subordinated to the Ministry for Shipbuilding - Ministerstwo Zeglugi).

Construction Offices

3. "A constructor at Centralne Biuro Konstrukcji Okretowych (Construction offices) in Gdansk both drafts blueprints and calculates design specifications. He is superior to the regular draftsmen, who are in turn superior to the trasseurs, or men who make wooden models of the small ship parts for the smiths to reproduce in metal. Many of the employees at the Centralne Biuro Konstrukcji Okretowych study nights at the Technikum Budowy Okretow Dla Pracujacych, 2 Piramowicza Street, Gdansk, to become full-fledged marine architects.
4. "A typical constructor at Centralne Biuro Konstrukcji Okretowych has a basic monthly salary of 602.37 zl, plus a 'sailing bonus' of 150 zl - although his work may be entirely on land. He can increase his income through overfulfillment of norms, ie doing his work in a shorter period of time than prescribed.

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- 2 -

50X1-HUM

If he could execute his assignments in half the time prescribed he could earn 500-600 zl more income per month. As such speed is impossible, another method is used. At the beginning of each month a constructor gets his work quota - say, 20 parts or pieces of equipment for which to calculate the specifications and prepare blueprints. According to the plan his norm is fulfilled if he has these blueprints ready within the month. If he does the work more quickly he gets a premium. The amount paid out in premiums depends on the speed of the worker. In order to earn as much as possible, the constructor sorts out his assignments. He selects those requiring the least calculations. Instead of sitting at them for a week, he prepares them in three days - and gets more than double his salary for that week because he has done 25% of his work with an 'akord of 200%'. The remaining assignments are also executed in groups based on the degree of complexity. Since each is paid for separately, a constructor can earn 20 up to 80% more than his basic salary, if he really sets his mind to it and knows the tricks of the trade, i.e. when to calculate seriously and when to guess. Of course, this means that the work is inaccurate, but that is something nobody cares about.

Shock Tempo Shipbuilding

"Ships are built today at shock tempo (udarnyje tempa). The only important thing is speed. That yields bad results. To speed up preparation of blueprints, the Centralne Biuro Konstrukcji Okrętowych no longer calculates accurately the dimensions and weights of various parts. The constructors guess. For instance, if a constructor has to determine the diameter of a pillar or support in a ship he reasons as follows: 'In accordance with the type of ship the diameter should be 30 cm. But the material we use is of pretty bad quality. Therefore I shall put into my blueprint a pillar of 45 cm just to be on the safe side.' Taken together, all such 'safe' pillars, supports, dividing walls, steel plates etc., made the ship up to 30% heavier than it should be and not safer at all; safety depends on accurate design.

"Not only are metal parts made thicker and heavier than required. Masts, doors, etc. down to the simplest hooks and catches, are designed unnecessarily massive. Things have gone so far that the steel wires used in a ship have been made 18 mm thicker than required - 38 mm instead of the necessary 20 mm - and, a thing that cannot be explained by any safety factor, 150 mm long instead of the required 50 m. It is the same with pipes and the outer hull; they are made 30 mm thick instead of 20 mm. The only exception is iron chains; their dimensions are standardized.

"Thus, the required speed of production has made accurate calculation impossible and reduced the safety and the operative potential of a ship. all ships built in Polish shipyards now suffer from such constructional defects as listed above. Guessing instead of calculation has been a practice since 1949.

 None of the newer Polish ships are really seaworthy.

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1. The following projects had serious faults caused by shoddy construction:

- a. Project 150,001: The supports (reinforcements) of the foremast obstructed the forward view from the captain's bridge. Special openings had to be made through the supports so that the captain could see the prow of his ship. This weakened the mast considerably. The ship was built in summer 1953.
- b. Project 131,005: The armature (armatura ok etowa) of this ship split during its trial tour in September 1953. The deck had split in August 1953 while the ship was still in the shipyard. The plates had been poorly welded.
- c. Project 150,002: The board [sic] of this ship was damaged during launching (zniesztalcenie nadburcia na srodekrecie) in July 1953. Two plates had to be replaced.

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- 3 -

50X1-HUM

- d. Project 132,001: The anchor could not be drawn because certain holes in side of the ship were too small. That happened in late summer 1953.
 - e. Project 130,011: The forward reinforcement plate (grodz zderzeniowa) was welded obliquely, instead of under an angle of 90°. This happened in September 1953. Nobody had measured properly.
 - f. Project 130,014: The entire lifesaving equipment on this ship, including the boats, had to be dismantled. The rodnie ratunkowe were so poor that they did not hold water during the tests in August 1953. New equipment had to be made at the yacht shipyard in Szczecin.
 - g. Project 131,007: Water seeped in at points where the plates had been welded. This happened in the beginning of September 1953. The welding had been done by the leading brigade, under (fnu) Cichowlas, the famous welder.
 - h. All the lifeboats built /date not specified/ at the Ustka shipyards had a warped stepka caused by the use of raw timber.
0. "Accident prevention is badly organized in all three shipyards at Gdansk. Fatal accidents occur. On 27 July 53 at Stocznia Gdanska one of the workers was killed instantly and another severely wounded when a press that was being hoisted fell on its foundation. The press was smashed. The widows of men killed by accidents during work get only a tiny pension - between 50 and 120 zł per month. In certain cases, if the victim was a prominent shockworker, he may be buried at the expense of the enterprise, 1 % of the state.
1. Soviet Specifications
- "Whenever the Polish shipyards build a ship for the Soviets, the latter insist that they be provided with three times as many spare parts as are required in international rules. This, the Soviets say, is because they want the ship fit to meet any emergency on the high seas. They maintain that the Poles lose nothing in this, because they are compensated under the trade agreement. That is not true. The Soviets pay - if they pay at all - per ship only, irrespective of how many spare parts it carries.
2. "On arrival in Leningrad, the new Polish-built ships turn over two-thirds of their spare parts to Soviet ships that have not been built in Poland. This procedure happened with the following coal and iron ore transports (rudoweglowce): s/s WORKUTA, s/s DONBAS, s/s KUZBAS (4880 tons) and s/s CHEREMKHOWO (2620 tons) and others in that same series. For each ship in the CHEREMKHOWO series, at least 40 tons of metal for spare parts were used in excess over what was legitimate - not to mention other types of construction material.
- Dzien Stoczniozca
3. "Every year on 29 June the Dzien Stoczniozca, or Day of the Shipyard Worker, is solemnly celebrated on the Polish coast. In honor of that day the shipyards must undertake all sorts of 'socialist obligations'.
4. "In 1953 the Stocznia Gdanska undertook to launch on 29 June a cargo freighter of the LEWANT type, 4000 tons. Her name was to be LOK. The ship was duly built and entered as finished into the report for plan fulfillment. When she was launched, however, the engines did not work properly. The repairs took some time, but they did work in the end. Then the real misfortune happened. In the general excitement nobody noticed that a large piece of timber, almost a beam, had floated aft. When the propeller was set in motion, it caught the beam and one of the blades was broken. Had this accident happened in the capitalist world it would not have been a major catastrophe. A new propeller would have been fetched from a warehouse, and everything would have been in order. In socialist Poland, however, the plan provides one propeller for every ship and no more. If two are used somebody will have to answer for this 'wrecking'

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- 4 -

50X1-HUM

of the plan. The management of Stocznia Gdanska found an ingenious way out of the LODZ difficulty. The next day the local paper carried a short notice: 'Yesterday the LODZ was renamed KOPERNIK' (not to be confused with the ferry of that name). This little ruse not only provided them with the right to provide the ship with a new propeller but also to note a considerable overfulfillment of the plan (przekroczenie planu). No ship called KOPERNIK had even been projected at Stocznia Gdanska and no material appropriated for it. On paper, however, the Stocznia appeared to have built two ships with the material for one. The management could expect a premium for having saved raw materials and for having produced more ships than expected. Also, if it did not fulfill its actual plan, this ruse would provide camouflage. There might be no premiums, but also no reprimands or fines. In all probability it will be the latter situation. Stocznia Gdanska was scheduled to build two more ships of the LEWANT type during 1953: the WARSZAWA and the NOWA HUTA. They probably will not be finished on time. It is quite possible that this LODZ falsification will never be discovered. The agencies which check on plan fulfillment look at the reports only and do not count the ships sailing the seven seas. In a report everything is sure to look all right; nobody's suspicions will even be aroused.

15. "The LODZ incident did not prevent the authorities from solemnly celebrating the 1953 Dzień Stoczniozca. Bierut and Rokossovski arrived in Gdansk for the occasion. (fnu) Kosto, the manager of Stocznia Gdanska, made a long speech on the work at the shipyard: the unproductive past under capitalism, the great plans for the future. None of the ordinary workers present even pretended to listen to the speech. They were interested in the distribution of prizes and the subsequent party in the largest hall of the shipyard, the so-called theater hall. The prizes were distributed to shockworkers in this order: six AGA radio sets (the highest prize), eight SHL motorcycles - 125 ccm, 16 bicycles, suit lengths, purchasing certificates for textiles, 20 watches, six suits of work overalls and, lastly, to the least deserving, diplomas for good work. A dance followed which was attended by all the high CP officials of the shipyard and of the town of Gdansk. About 300 persons were present. There was vodka, wine, beer and a fine cold buffet.

(fnu) Kosto

16. "The general manager of Stocznia Gdanska is (fnu) Kosto

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